

Report on	Product Safety Update Following EU Exit
Date of Meeting	9 th March 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on work carried out by the Environmental Health Department, in association with the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), from a safety perspective for consumer goods.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was created in January 2018 to deliver consumer protection and to support business confidence, productivity and growth.
2.2	The OPSS is the national regulator for all consumer products, except for vehicles, medicines and food. The OPSS is also the national regulator for legal metrology, ensuring weighing and measuring instruments are accurate and reliable.
2.3	The OPSS works with local, national and international regulators, with consumer representatives and with businesses to deliver effective protections and to support compliance. This includes the District Councils in Northern Ireland.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	In October 2020, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) issued an offer of grant funding to each individual District Council up until the end of March 2021. This funding offer was made to assist Northern Ireland District Councils enable the UK to meet the provisions of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP).
3.2	In addition, this will enable the UK to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for EU oversight and reporting requirements, and to build capacity and capability for market surveillance and ensure access to enforcement equipment and facilities.
3.3	As part of the Governance around the funding, each Environmental Health Department is required to complete a monthly return outlining relevant activities undertaken.

3.4	To date, Mid Ulster District Council has completed and returned monthly returns for November, December and January outlining the work that has been undertaken to assist with ensuring the requirements of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and NIP are being progressed. Examples of the work undertaken include a substantial scoping exercise to identify businesses within the Mid Ulster District Council to which new requirements will apply. For example, some businesses which pre EU Exit would have been considered to be distributors may now be considered importers and different requirements will apply. Such businesses, along with existing importers and manufacturers, will need to be provided with advice and support to meet their obligations for importing and exporting consumer goods. In addition, preparations are in being made in the event of an EU audit which may take place at short notice.
3.5	Additional Environmental Health resource has been employed until the end of March 2021, in line with the funding from OPSS, to carry out this scoping exercise and the associated contact with businesses.
3.6	Although OPSS have advised that funding may be available for the next financial year, this has not yet been secured and staffing arrangements will be adapted in line with the funding. A business case is being developed regionally for discussion at SOLACE.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Funding expected to be at a similar level but not yet confirmed.
	Human: Additional officer time to undertake required checks and assisting businesses in relation to food and consumer products.
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	None.